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IN MEMORIAM
ANNIE E. FISHER



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ANNIE ELIZABETH FISHER

JANUARY 18, 1851

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Thomas Todd Company

PRINTERS

Boston

MEMORIAL SERVICE
MISS ANNIE E. FISHER

VILLAGE HALL
ANNISQUAM, MASSACHUSETTS

August 21, 1921



Mr. C. F. Bradley, presiding, said:

We have come together for a brief service in memory of a dear friend. It is very meet that we gather here, and that the service should be simple and informal. It cannot be adequate, but its spirit of chastened grief and abounding gratitude and affection may be as perfect as mortal things can be. And all who take part in it are personal friends of Miss Fisher, and most of them are her fellow-workers for many years.

As an invocation Mr. Lewis will read an ancient prayer that was used daily by Miss Fisher. The closing prayer which Mr. Boivin will read, was also in constant use by Miss Fisher.

INVOCATION. Rev. George H. Lewis. (From Book of Common Order used in daily service of the church in Edinburgh.)

Thou who art the Father of our spirits, help
Thou us to feel Thy presence here where we are
gathered in solemn remembrance of the life of
her, Thy child, who was so near to Thee in spirit
and who daily raised her voice and spirit to Thee
with the words of that ancient prayer : To Thee we
commend ourselves, body, soul, and spirit. Thine
is the day, O Lord, Thine is the night. Grant that
the Sun of Righteousness may abide in our hearts
to drive away the darkness of wicked thoughts;
and as Thou coverest the earth with darkness,
cover us over with Thine infinite mercy. Amen.

MISS FISHER'S EARLY LIFE

MRS. ELLEN F. ADAMS

ANNIE E. FISHER was born in Charlestown, Mass. When she was two years old, her father died, and the mother, with her five little children, moved to Yarmouth on Cape Cod, which had previously been her home and where her parents were still living.

A beautiful old house, built on ancestral acres, became the home of the family. This house was later the property of Miss Fisher, and she cared for it tenderly through her life. The roots of the family were very deep, for here an ancestor, Andrew Hallett, came in 1638 from Plymouth, with his sons and others of the town, acquired a large tract of land, and a portion of this land has never been out of the hands of the family. The Fisher house was built by Miss Fisher's grandfather, Andrew Hallett, a stone's throw from the site of the first house put up in Yarmouth.

The Cape Cod towns were in those days of much more importance than at present. Many of the famous old Atlantic sea-captains came from Cape Cod, and in their later years they built stately homes and lived lives of dignified ease. There was enterprise and culture, a refined and interesting society, by no means cut off from the larger problems of State and Nation. The schools were good, newspapers flourished; lectures given by men of world-wide reputation, through the

agency of the old "Institutes," were a part of the life of the people. Every profession was well represented. It would be a labor of love to go more deeply into the village life as I remember it, but I pass on, my only purpose being to show something of the influences which surrounded Miss Fisher in her early life.

In this environment, and surrounded by a large family connection, Miss Fisher grew to womanhood. She was bright and gay, venturesome, energetic, full of fun and wit, loved and appreciated by her friends. When she was eighteen, she attended the Normal School at Bridgewater, and after two years of very successful study, she began teaching in one of the Grammar Schools of Boston. She was an excellent teacher, and she loved the children under her care; but she was always ambitious, and the medical profession had always been of interest to her. After two years of teaching, the way opened for her to study medicine, and she entered the Medical School of Boston University.

Miss Fisher graduated from the Medical School second in rank in her class. Almost immediately she went abroad to study in the hospitals in France, those hospitals having been recently opened to the study of women students.

Miss Fisher and a lady from England, one of the Garret Anderson family, were the two earliest women to avail themselves of this privilege. There was an intense prejudice against the admission of

women, both among the doctors and students. Miss Fisher encountered very many hard and humiliating experiences in her work there, but also much of value was gained, and she always felt it worth while.

Returning home, she settled in Boston and opened an office with a friend, Dr. Laura Porter. Work came to her immediately, and she labored day and night at her profession. Her practice was largely among women and children, and she gave everything there was in her to bring health and comfort to her patients. In the case of a very sick patient, it was her custom to make a call in the small hours of the night, feeling that the vital powers were at their lowest at that time, and she wished to guard against a possible collapse. You who knew Miss Fisher will understand how entire was her giving, how little she took into account any limits to her own strength.

After some years of this, the strain became too great and her health permanently broke down. She had a struggle in giving up her work, and she made every effort to regain her strength; but it was apparent that while she might live useful years in a less strenuous form of work, she could never again bear the strain of the practice of medicine.

Miss Fisher became a member of the Church of the Disciples, under Rev. James Freeman Clarke, early in her Boston life, and here, among other and dear friends, she met Miss Annette

Rogers and her father, Mr. Henry B. Rogers. The friendship between Miss Rogers and Miss Fisher became very close and intimate, and finally, after the death of Mr. Rogers, Miss Rogers and Miss Fisher formed one family and they lived together in the beautiful old house at 5 Joy Street. You who have known Miss Rogers and Miss Fisher know how close was the relation, how deep the devotion between the two.

My purpose has been only to supply a few facts about Miss Fisher's life which might be unknown to some of her friends here. It is for others to speak of later years.

MISS FISHER'S WORK FOR THE BLIND

MISS LUCY WRIGHT

FOR more than eighteen years Miss Fisher brought her great gifts to the councils of organized work for the blind, in the days when its history was in the making and when, at the same time and always, she was giving herself to the personal service of countless men and women who had their lives to live out under this immeasurable handicap.

You who knew her have in mind her swift insight, her glorious certainty (hard-won perhaps, but certainty) of what would be right, her habit of decisive thought, her selective genius, her skill in the clear use of words, her fearlessness, the sense she carried of expecting great things, and the elevation of spirit that gave beauty and power to each material gift and forceful action.

I wish that I knew how to convey to you the significance of these gifts in work for the blind, in both the aspects of it to which she devoted herself—a double task which would have been possible to but few in the world. Her efforts seemed to center themselves about one great determination to vitalize the careers of blind people, to help them to a real share in the work and recreation of the world. How many and great were the obstacles in the way, Miss Fisher knew as few could know, and she seemed to possess a prophetic power by which she could tell, step by step, what must

be done, for the individual or the group, to destroy the barriers and open up the way to living.

Officially Miss Fisher was, from the beginning of the movement for industrial training and employment of the blind, a member of the executive committee, of the council, and of many special committees of the Massachusetts Association for Promoting the Interests of the Blind.

It is a great experience to have seen, year after year, problem after problem, in work for which there was no precedent, come before these committees whose aim it was "to initiate and promote movements in the interest of the blind"; and it would be impossible to exaggerate Miss Fisher's part in giving reality to these aims. She was indeed "a doer of the word," with a power that was incomparable for cutting through red tape and every form of complexity, and bringing a meeting through to a purposeful conclusion.

At the end of the first three years, when what then appeared the main purpose of its life had been accomplished in the establishment of a permanent State Commission for the Blind, the Association even planned to go out of existence. They had initiated a campaign for prevention of needless blindness, supported a quarterly journal of work for the blind, conducted an important series of experiments with blind labor, and secured a recognized place for these important subjects in the program of the State. But one need after another claimed their attention, and for fifteen

years there followed what, so far as I know, has been an unprecedented form of activity on the part of a private organization, holding itself at the service of the State—work in which Miss Fisher had a steadily increasing part.

No such work could be other than complex, involving as it did the feelings of a physically handicapped group, always sensitive and unwillingly dependent, involving continuously questions of appropriation of public funds, and problems of raising private funds; problems of preventive medicine, of competition in industry, of production with handicapped labor, of distribution by both forced and economic methods of the things made, and of methods and problems of special relief for suffering and need.

But this very complexity seemed to provide a challenge by which Miss Fisher's spirit was verily renewed. Her part in grasping strategic moments and methods, and in seeing venture after venture through to a finish, could not be over-estimated—nor could her fearlessness when there was fighting to be done and we must be on the unpopular side.

After the initial work of the first three years, with the Association as auxiliary to the State Commission, the Association continued, largely through the genius of Miss Fisher, to make its aims and ideals effective through a new series of efforts.

In this way the campaign for the prevention

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of blindness was again forwarded in a way that led to the initiation of classes for children with defective eyesight in the public schools; social service was established at the Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary; and several new industrial experiments were tried out—the willow industry, the Oriental rug experiment, and in the last year of Miss Fisher's life, the experiment of spinning and weaving homespun by blind women.

This last detail illustrates in so many ways Miss Fisher's quality of invention and her tireless way of coming back to a thing of which she was sure, that I should like to say a word about it. She must have had this in mind for at least fifteen years, occasionally protesting that spinning was possible for the blind, and that the weaving of homely, serviceable fabrics should be tried as well as of art fabrics. And it was in this last year of her life that she again suggested and promoted the experiment, finding and bringing spinning wheels to the shop herself—and only two weeks before her death, holding in her hands the result of her efforts in samples of the work she had always had in mind, woven by blind weavers from worsted spun by a blind spinner. The workers to whom she wrote her recognition of this result will never forget it.

Three other ventures, initiated and directed by the Association, were carried on throughout this period:

The Loan and Aid Fund of the Association.
James A. Woolson House, a social and industrial center for blind women located in Cambridge.

Rogers House, formerly called Thomas Park House in South Boston, a social and educational center for blind men.

I will speak of only one of these, the one that was, I think, especially dear to Miss Fisher, and came of her devotion to the purpose of advancing ways by which blind men might keep their contact with the larger life of the community, the country, and the world.

Miss Rogers had led us all in work for the prevention of blindness. Mrs. Kehew was the one to respond to the suggestion for the present use of Woolson House. And it was Miss Fisher who so warmly responded, at a most critical time of factional struggles among the blind themselves, and among their political friends, to the thought of a dignified center of educational usefulness and social resource, which blind men might direct for themselves with the counsel and support of the Association. (How Miss Fisher loved people to be self-propelling!) "Let me have a hand in that!" she exclaimed. I can hear her saying it now; and what a part she had, with her active energy, in establishing the center now called Rogers House.

It was developed during the war period. Miss Fisher rejoiced in the bringing of current events to the groups there, in the flag-raising of the first year, in the weekly social events, for the bearing

they might have on the lives of the men. It was she who so often provided pleasant things to eat for special occasions at Rogers House, saying, "Boys need food to be happy and to be at home." She rejoiced always at the news of the hospitality the House extended to some newly blinded man, at the news that coming there had given his courage back to some one, that some young man had found the house a refuge until he could start himself in business, that the men had worked out a coöperative plan for buying sugar or men's clothing.

Miss Fisher's work with the problems of individuals can hardly be suggested. Much of it will never be known, for, as a member of the Rogers House Committee of blind men pointed out, only those who *had* to know knew the good Miss Fisher did. What her imaginative insight and deep knowledge helped her to bring into the lives of countless men and women of this group, only those who have had the experience of blindness can really know.

Her influence upon other workers with the blind was, as you can imagine, very great. As one of them has written, "She was so intensely human, and understanding and caring herself, in her relations with blind folks." She never failed to write the blind florist for the gift of flowers or vegetables, and she made him feel the friendliness behind.

Miss Fisher was, I believe, most sensitive to

the limitations of the lives of blind women. She found it hard sometimes, I know, to go among them for this reason. But it sometimes seemed that the harder a thing was to do, the more sure Miss Fisher was to do it and wrest beauty from the doing. About a year ago, after Miss Rogers's death, she went to the Woolson House Shop and asked if she might say a word to the girls about Miss Rogers. She told them of her lovely spirit, how she knew it to be true that Miss Rogers never felt anger or resentment against any one; and so she left them, with a memory of the two friends that will never fail them.

MISS FISHER AS A FRIEND

I. MISS ISA GRAY

I HAVE been asked to speak to you of Miss Fisher as a friend, the friend of all whom her life touched from the beginning. There are few now, perhaps, whose intimate knowledge of her began so long ago as mine, when she was a young, vigorous, and beautiful woman, practicing with all her heart her chosen profession of medicine, the profession which all who knew her would have chosen for her as offering the largest field for her genius as a friend.

For who can measure the opportunities that come to one who accepts the duties and responsibilities of that most unselfish of all professions? Those of us who have heard her say in her vibrant voice, of one or another, "She was one of my old patients," will realize that the tie once formed was never broken, but made one more thread in the varied warp and woof that was weaving around her life through all the changes that came to her.

For the change that came so early, in broken health, which forced her to give up this chosen life, was one which led her, not into enforced idleness, but into new paths, which opened in so many directions, that it seems impossible to give, in this short space, even a sketch of the full life which was hers, much less a living picture of her as she trod them.

Who can ever forget the charm and the inspiration of that buoyant spirit, which never waited to be asked for help or service, but, as one of her dear friends has said, "like the father in the parable of the prodigal son, ran to meet" whoever seemed to need the warmth and sympathy and understanding with which her heart was always filled, most of all for those who needed it most, and who, to so many of us, might have seemed unworthy such a welcome.

Not only the discouraged, who had lost all hope of better things, and who had to be lifted by main force, as it were, up to a new outlook, but the dissolute and depraved, those who had themselves thrown away their life's best chances, were made to feel that they had a friend who would never give up hope for them, and whose faith in their possibilities gave them a chance to redeem the past.

And while she was thus giving help and strength to those who had nothing but gratitude to give in return, what was she not daily pouring out to the friends she so loved and who lived in the sunshine of her presence? And all with such gaiety and sweetness that it seemed but the overflowing of a sunshiny nature, blessing all it touched, until when, in the times of stress that come in every life, they called out to her for help, they found deep wells of faith and tenderness, and "leaves for the healing of the nations."

Her gaiety and fun in her younger life were

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irresistible, and, though tempered as the years went on by increasing ill-health and heavy cares, so that to newer friends this may not sound now like her, those of us who have known her for so long feel that these were always living underneath and were a part of the strength she showed to endure and to bless.

And she was one of those who could say in all simplicity: "Lord, when saw we thee a hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?"

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

II. REV. PITT DILLINGHAM

ONE supreme friendship of Miss Fisher's stands out above all others, as we all know, and that is quite beyond words, covering as it did so many years of companionship and comradeship as close as life itself, and ending in such an act of devotion during the last two years of Miss Rogers's life as must have had much to do in hastening her own death. Who will undertake to say the adequate word about the beauty and the appeal of that relationship? It was not only so rare a service, but service transfigured by the spirit which made it possible by a

sharing of the inner life, an understanding and a sympathy and an affection so complete, that one saw an ideal friendship—two souls yoked in all exercises of noble endeavor. And all this, of course, with the special coloring of pathos and appeal which came from the relation of one who could see with one who could not. This relationship overshadows all others, and no one can think of Miss Fisher apart from the beauty and charm and the challenge of this, and the great privilege of it, and the utter faithfulness of it to the end.

Just one thing more, which we all know and which connects itself with this special friendship. Miss Fisher's life was one of strenuous service in many directions, but her service was always primarily the act of a friend. Just because, among other things, of her own exceptionally vivid personality, her intense personal life, no mere mechanical efficiency, no dead work, could fall from her hands. What she did or gave had this touch of life, as of a personal interest and privilege she was exercising.

So to speak of her as a friend has this wide range: her service was friendship and so was transfigured, as so much of well-meaning service is not, in this world of ours.

I must stop here with these few words: What Miss Fisher was, in the sense of friendship apart from service, is in the safe-keeping of her many friends, and I will not attempt to interpret for them. It is best witnessed by such a company

of friends as will be gathered together in her memory on Sunday, if we add to the thought of them the larger company of friends who cannot be present. And if one of the modern arguments for life after death is based on the thought of the soul as the highest form of energy, that is, as "conscious energy," for which death is transition to still higher forms of activity in this mystery of the universe, then the overflowing life of our dear friend makes its own special appeal, makes its own strong and joyful suggestion, makes its own earnest call.

MISS FISHER'S WORK FOR THE LIBRARY

MRS. SUSAN F. RICKER

IN no department of village work have the personality and love of Miss Fisher been more strongly in evidence than in the Village Hall Library. From the very beginning of the organizing of the Library up to the time when it became necessary to pass the responsibility into other hands, Miss Fisher had been the very foundation and life of it, giving not only of her time and money, but passing judgment on each volume, and making and keeping a standard for good reading equalled in very few libraries of its size.

Especially was she interested in the Children's Department, insisting that any child of school age be not only invited to use the Library free of any charge, but urging that the children come in and seek the assistance of the Librarian in reference to their work.

Her personal gifts to the Library have been many and given in so modest a way that the Committee hardly know the extent of them. Recently, when it became evident from requests from the children for help in various ways, that we needed something reliable and up-to-date, Miss Fisher gladly presented to the Library the complete set of the "Book of Knowledge" (20 volumes). This was her latest gift, and I am glad to say she knew

before she left us just how wonderfully they filled the need and how eagerly the children were using them.

A memorial service usually carries with it regrets. Our feeling today should not be one of regret, but rather of gratitude and thanksgiving; for Miss Fisher's life in our little village has been one of gracious giving. With wide vision of community need and service, she had the capacity to carry her vision to realization.

As long as the people in Annisquam continue to enjoy good books and magazines; as long as the children are encouraged to become friends with the men and women who live in the pages of History and Biography, and find in their own little Library the incentive to more intimate acquaintance with English and American literature, so long Miss Fisher's life will have its permanent, active influence here. And the more we use what she has so generously provided for us, the more we show our appreciation of her interest, the more will we radiate her inner vision.

MISS FISHER'S WORK WITH THE BAND

MR. PIERCE HODGKINS

I VERY much doubt if any one can fully appreciate the results attained by Miss Fisher's work with the band, but at the conclusion of my short talk, I will leave it to your judgment as to whether or not the work paid.

Miss Fisher always took a keen interest in the children of Annisquam, was constantly planning different things in order to help and instruct them. One of her first plans was to establish a school of basketry, and she employed a teacher, furnished material, a place to meet, etc., from which many young people of Annisquam gained valuable knowledge along this line.

However, Miss Fisher felt some other work would be more beneficial, and decided upon the organization of a Boys' Band, which she carried through to perfection. At this time many people felt that such a thing never would really pay or amount to any material success.

Miss Fisher furnished musical instruments, a hall, and an instructor, which any one who has ever been connected with this line of profession knows to be very costly.

Many young men of Annisquam took advantage of her generous offer in both the first and second bands organized by Miss Fisher.

This all started some fifteen years ago, but listen for a moment while I tell you what one might

have seen on the night of November 11, 1918, when the close of the most terrible war in history took place.

The government had organized all bands possible, as their value is so well known to boys away from home and naturally subjected to homesickness. Miss Fisher's boys either had made possible, or had played in the following army and navy posts, the usual "Taps" at the close of each day. But on the night of this memorable day, had one been able to see all of these places at once, he would have heard "Home, Sweet Home," followed by "The Star Spangled Banner," on many of our ships at sea, at naval bases, in many of the army camps of all branches of service in our own country, France, England, and the Army of Occupation. Three of her boys were leaders in these bands, others were musicians, and still others had helped organize or instruct those in other bands. One sad fact is that two brothers, members of her first band, lie buried in Flanders, where they fell with the Canadian Army during a terrible onset.

So at this time over 100,000 soldiers and sailors heard the strains of this music with a feeling that they can never forget, never knowing who had made it possible.

Did it pay?

MISS FISHER'S WORK FOR INDIVIDUALS

PROFESSOR CHARLES F. BRADLEY

I HAVE been asked to say a few words about Miss Fisher's work for individuals. The details must be left wholly to the memories of those who already know them. For in this she certainly did not let her left hand know what her right hand was doing. The spirit of this work is well described, as one of her nearest friends has suggested to me, by a passage in Robert Browning's drama of "Colombe's Birthday." It is as follows:

"There is a vision in the heart of each
Of justice, mercy, wisdom, tenderness
To wrong and pain, and knowledge of their cure;
And these embodied in a woman's form
That best transmits them, pure as first received
From God above her, to mankind below."

Robert Browning.
"Colombe's Birthday." Act II.

"Tenderness to wrong and pain, and knowledge of their cure." When she learned of any one in pain or financial difficulties, or of any one going wrong, she at once felt a personal sense of responsibility, of duty to remedy and save, if it was in any way possible. She did not say, "Some one must do something," but, "What can I do?" "Here am I, send me." She went to work, promptly, energetically, wisely, courageously. As

a near friend said, "She never feared anything." She was an embodiment of physical and moral courage. And where others would have become discouraged, she persevered. If one thing failed, she tried another. Details manifestly cannot be given; but with, so far as I know, only one exception, her efforts for the moral reformation of these individuals were, in the end, always successful. Thus she brought to pass the highest joy on earth, joy which we are told is reëchoed in heaven. Summer and winter Annisquam and individuals in Annisquam were in her thoughts and on her heart. As Mr. Lewis said to me, "She seems to have been the best friend Annisquam ever had."

In work for individuals and in all her activities, who can take her place? Who among us can reëmbody such a vision, such a spirit as this—intense, full of the joy of life, with a rich sense of humor, a valiant courage, a love of beauty, and a "tenderness to wrong and pain, and knowledge of their cure"? May we at least seek to rekindle our smouldering torches by the flame of her burning light and to pass on the sacred fire to those who shall come after us!

CLOSING PRAYER

REV. BERTRAM D. BOIVIN

Grant to me above all things to be desired that I may find rest in Thee and that my heart may find its peace in Thee.

Thou art the peace of my heart, Thou its sole repose. Out of Thee all things are hard and unquiet.

In this very peace, that is, in Thyself, the Sole, the Supreme, the Eternal Good, I will sleep and take my rest. Amen.

May the blessing of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion with the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

RESOLUTIONS

IN many hearts in many places, the name of Annie E. Fisher will be held in grateful memory as long as life shall last. But nowhere, we believe, will it be held with more reason for gratitude than in Annisquam, where, for nearly twenty years, she has been active in good works in varied and almost countless ways. She was one of the founders of the Village Hall Association, and, among its officers, no one has devoted so much time and energy to its various activities. Summer and winter its interests were in her thoughts, and her energies were devoted to its prosperity and usefulness.

While she neglected none of its needs, her chief care was given to the Boys' Band and the Library. Here were exhibited, in a high degree, the marked traits of her character—her idealism, her faith, her broad and warm sympathies, her courage and devotion. Others might hesitate or waver, but she never ceased to hope and to achieve. With others, she gave time and money to the work. But beyond all others she gave herself. To many individuals she was veritably a good angel. To large groups she brought new interests of a high order and opened new avenues of enjoyment and enlightenment.

We shall sorely miss her cheerful courage, her fine humor, her lofty inspiration; and, as an Association, we sincerely mourn her great loss;

and we hereby express to her relatives and nearest friends our deep and heartfelt sympathy.

For the Village Hall Association,

MARGARET W. PARKER

SUSAN F. RICKER

CHARLES F. BRADLEY

Committee.

Annisquam, Massachusetts,

June 30th, 1921.

RESOLUTIONS

During the summer this village has suffered a great loss in the passing on of Miss Annie E. Fisher.

The members of Wild Rose Troop of Girl Scouts feel this as their personal loss because of Miss Fisher's untiring interest, efficient help and advice, as well as the financial aid which she has so willingly and generously given.

Therefore, be it resolved: That this Troop express its sorrow at her passing and extend its heartfelt sympathy to the relatives and friends who survive her.

Also, be it resolved: That a copy of these resolutions be sent to her sister, Mrs. Adams, and to her dear friend, Miss Perkins.

And, be it also resolved: That a copy of these resolutions be placed upon the records of Wild Rose Troop of Girl Scouts of Annisquam.

IDA PULSIFER, *Captain.*

EDNA C. HODGKINS, *Lieutenant.*

AGNES M. RICKER, *Counselor.*

*Annisquam, Massachusetts,
August 4th, 1921.*

SELECTIONS READ ON JUNE 27th, 1921

"There is a vision
In the heart of each, of Justice,
Mercy, Tenderness,
And a consciousness of wrong and pain,
And knowledge of the cure."

"Life is but a little Holding
Given to do a mighty labour;
We are one with Heaven and the stars,
When 'tis given to serve God's aims."

"See that no one fails to use the loving help
of God."

"And I saw a great ocean of darkness and of
Death, and round the ocean of darkness, I saw
an infinite ocean of Light and of Love, and *that*
I saw was the Love of God."

(Service at the old home, Five Joy Street, Boston.)

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Annie E. Fisher

OCT 24 '49

WOMAN'S ARCHIVES

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